

Appln. No. 09/933,332
Amdt. dated May 2, 2005
Reply to Office Action of Feb. 2, 2005
Docket No. BO(9-2001-0007 (242)

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

These remarks are made in response to the Office Action of February 2, 2005 (Office Action). As this response is timely filed within the 3-month shortened statutory period, no fee is believed due.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1-30 and 36-62 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,564,251 to Gudjonsson, *et al.* (Gudjonsson).

Applicants have amended claims 1, 16, 23, 24, 28, 36, 51, 58, and 59 to clarify what is meant by a contact list, by granting access to a contact list, and what is meant by a chat participant. These amendments are supported by page 4, lines 3-6, by page 11, lines 2-17, by page 11, lines 18-23, by FIG. 1, items 140, 240, 110, and 120, and throughout the specification.

Applicants have amended claims 4, 5, 6, 7, 39, 40, 41, and 42 to clarify the specified icor. is presented within the chat session interface used by the second chat session participant, as supported by FIG. 1, items 200, 240, 120, 121, 122, 123, and 124, by page 20, lines 14-20, and throughout the specification.

Applicants note that claim 8 previously included numerous inventive elements which have been included in an amended claim 8, a new claim 63, and a new claim 64. Claims 9, 43, and 44 has been amended for consistency. These claim amendments are supported by previous claim 8, by FIG. 1, and by material contained throughout the specification. No new matter has been added as a result of the above amendments.

Prior to turning to the specific rejections of the art, a brief review of the Applicants' claimed invention can be helpful. The Applicants' claimed invention adds a contact management sharing capability to chat session participants, thereby allowing one chat session participant to access a contact list owned by another chat session participant. It should be appreciated that chat session discussions are often topically discussion

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forums (occurring in chat rooms). During chat discussions, it is not uncommon for participants to begin to interpersonally network with each other. That is, one chat participant may desire to share a contact with another participant. The shared contact may or may not be a chat session participant. Additionally, the participant sharing the contact may not desire to share the contact with all participants logged onto the chat forum, and so transmitting a new chat message that discloses the contact information to all chat participants may not be desirable.

Using conventional technologies, a chat participant with a strong desire to share a contact, may have to explicitly request private contact information from the contact receiving participant, then initiate a new communication (such as an email, instant message, or telephone call), look up the desired contact information, place the information in the new communication (usually cutting and pasting), and convey the communication containing this information to the contact receiving participant. The process must be repeated, at least in part, for each contact shared and for each chat participant that is to receive the shared information. The sharing of contact management information among chat session participants is stifled because no mechanism exists that makes it easy for contact information to be selectively shared, which the Applicants' claimed invention is designed to resolve.

To illustrate the Applicants' invention by an operational example, numerous chat participants may be logged onto a chat room focusing upon digital rights management issues. One chat participant may be conveying chat messages that he/she received a notice from a music company concerning an alleged music piracy. Another chat participant may have had a similar problem, which was positively resolved with help of an intellectual property attorney. Using the claimed invention, the another chat participant can share the intellectual property attorney's contact information with the

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notice receiving participant without sharing the contact information with other chat participants.

A. Gudjonsson fails to teach that one chat session participant can let another chat session participant access his/her contact list

Claims 1-30 and 36-62 have been rejected under § 102 as being anticipated by Gudjonsson, however, fails to explicitly or inherently teach each of the Applicants' claimed limitations.

Gudjonsson teaches a "seeing list" or a list of users who are permitted to see the online status of a contact lists' owner. The "seeing list" is an owner's list that authorizing specific individuals to know whether the owner is online. The online status of the "seeing list" owner is hidden from online personalities not explicitly included within the seeing list, thereby granting the seeing list owner a bit of privacy, regarding the owner's online status. Gudjonsson also teaches the disclosed privacy technique can utilize a negative list (a blinding list) instead of a positive list (seeing list). That is, an owner can place individuals within the blinding list, which individuals are explicitly not granted the online status of the blinding lists' owner, but other individuals are presumably allowed to see the online status.

Hence, Gudjonsson's teachings are a chat list analogue for a "buddy list" of an instant messaging application. Where an owner of a "buddy list" can select whether to hide or show the owner's online status. Thus person A can select settings within his own buddy list that prevents person B from knowing whether person A is online or not.

Referring specifically to independent claims 1, 16, 23, 24, 28, 36, 51, 58, and 59 Applicants claim the limitation of: a contact list including contact information maintained

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by a first person involved in a chat session, where the contact list information is accessible by a second person involved in the chat session.

Gudjonsson teaches no such limitation. The portions of Gudjonsson cited for this teaching (for claim 1) are column 24, lines 32-43, column 25, lines 6-20, and column 27, lines 36-44). Other cited portions of Gudjonsson include column 26, lines 59-67, column 17, lines 1-4, column 29, lines 64-67, and column 30, lines 1-16. Each shall be analyzed in turn.

Column 24, lines 32-43 of Gudjonsson teach that a communication session can be established between a first person and a second person. Where to establish this communication session, the first person can lookup the second persons' user identifier by using a contact list (maintained by the first person). It teaches, in other words, that person A can maintain a contact list (that includes person B), which person A can use to contact person B.

Column 25, lines 6-20 of Gudjonsson teach that a routing service can include contact information for "rendezvousing" others. Rendezvousing can establish a communication session using contact information maintained within the routing service. A user can trigger this communication, without specifically knowing the exact contact information of a desired contact because the rendezvousing service can maintain and protect this information. That is, a user of the rendezvousing service can make "obscure" their own contact information (much like having an unlisted number) so that the only way to contact them is via the routing service (and not directly).

Applicants note that nowhere in this cited section does Gudjonsson suggest that person B has access to contacts maintained by person A. Instead, Gudjonsson suggests a way for users to force contacting parties to utilize the routing service by hiding person A's direct contact data from person B.

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Column 27, lines 36-44 discusses a user receiving a notification when they are added by others to a contact list. That is, if user A adds user B to user A's contact list, user B can in certain embodiments receive a notification. Apparently this is done so that user B can restrict user A from contacting user B or knowing user B's online status if so desired by user B through the use of user B's blinding or seeing list.

Column 26, lines 59-67 and column 17, lines 1-4 teach that a user must maintain a "blind out list" to prevent other users of the contact service from knowing the online status for the user. This provides a way for user A to prevent user B from knowing whether user A is online or not. No teachings are provided that would allow user B to access the contact information contained of user A's contacts that is maintained by user A (which is claimed by the Applicants).

Column 29, lines 64-67 and column 30, lines 1-16 outline assumptions built into a mathematical model showing the performance of the routing service. This assumption is a worst-case scenario, where typically, optimizations are possible. When common contacts are included within different people's contact lists (both user A and B have user C as a contact) then the overhead on the router is somewhat reduced. This portion refers to this situation as contact sharing. Overhead is reduced because the routing system only has to determine user C's online status once in order to relay this information to both person A and person B. This section of Gudjonsson makes no mention of user B having access to user A's contact information, nor does it imply such functionality.

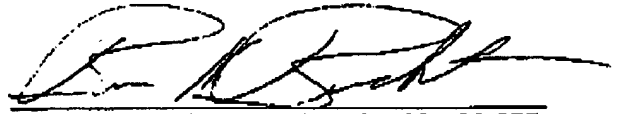
In light of the above, Gudjonsson clearly does not teach the claimed limitation of allowing chat participants to share contact information maintained in individual contact lists with one another. Notably, for a § 102 rejection to hold, each claimed limitation must be expressly or inherently taught. Since Gudjonsson fails in this regard, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections to claims 1-30 and 36-62 be withdrawn.

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The Applicants believe that this application is now in full condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested. The Applicants request that the Examiner call the undersigned if clarification is needed on any matter within this Amendment, or if the Examiner believes a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of the subject application to completion.

Respectfully submitted,

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